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ABSTRACT

Although needs of school districts vary with size, degree of teacher negotiation procedures, and type of community involvement, the administrative team model is presented as an effective, appropriate administrative organization. Based on an assumption that each level of authority in a school district possesses and exercises expertise and unique insight for input into decision-making and policy-formation, team administration involves those who are closest to the point of implementation enabling workable decisions. Team membership roles should be clearly defined to maintain team feeling, a need motivated by increasing teacher negotiations. An administrative team model is graphically presented in this monograph. (Author/DN)

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# The Administrative Team

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# Preface

Conflict has always been present in the highly personal interaction involved in public education. Responding to a reward system which stresses compliance, administrators have traditionally suppressed conflict as they exercised the power and authority of their office.

America's schools today are caught up in a crescendo of cultural and social changes which actually encourage the open resolution of conflict through a bilateral expression of power. Familiar examples of this trend are professional negotiations, student demonstrations and parental boycotts. As conflict becomes more institutionalized, it necessitates the designing of new organizational models which can effectively resolve such differences without unduly dissipating the energies and morals of the staff, nor the necessary unity or harmony within the school system.

Educators in school district after district have had to reassess the traditional superordinate-subordinate relationship between teachers and administrators. Many large city principals report their boards of education are caught between demanding teachers on the one side and equally demanding community members on the other. Reacting to these pressures, boards of education have sought to appease both groups by compromising the principal's prerogatives and have negotiated items of concern to him without involving him.

Since the principal is charged with the educational leadership, as well as the managerial tasks of the school, central administrators must now reassess the traditional relationship between middle administrators and the superintendent in order to ascertain whether the present organizational pattern will constitute the best possible utilization of the expertise possessed by these individuals.

The single leader concept runs contrary to much of our knowledge concerning the nature of effective leadership; whereas, the team concept is compatible with the fact that

emergent leaders make unique contributions in a permissive atmosphere and the sum total of such leadership is far greater than the parts. Contributing factors for a revised administrative pattern would also include mushrooming size of districts, consolidation of districts, and the degree of specialization which is apparent.

The effective superintendent today recruits capable supportive administrators and supervisors, then employs them in such a manner as to most effectively accomplish the administrative function for that school. This type of involvement would promote the utilization of principals, supervisors and others in communications with the board of education, the community, and the student body, recognizing that in individual areas of administration their expertise often exceeds that of the superintendent. It behooves administrators to reassess the relationship between principal-supervisor-director and superintendent in order to ascertain whether the present organizational pattern guarantees them the best possible utilization of the expertise possessed by each. Such a modification necessitates the establishment of open communication and sharing of ideas, thus creating an atmosphere most conducive to change and to good leadership. In partnership with the superintendent, the principal has a significant contribution to make, but such a partnership cannot be bought, coerced or dictated, although it can readily be earned.

The Ohio Department of Elementary School Principals believes that this kind of leadership can be facilitated through the "Administrative Team Concept." Such an administrative team, also referred to as shared management team or management team, is based on the assumption that each level of authority possesses and exercises expertise and unique insight, both of which can provide needed input to facilitate decision-making and policy formulation. This leads us toward a new model of organization in which individuals are involved at the policy making level according to the contribution which each stands to make. Such a team approach to decision-making, involving those who are closest to the point of implementation, should produce decisions and policies which are better understood, more acceptable, and more workable.

# ALTERNATIVES

Basically, elementary principals who serve under negotiated agreements have two needs. First, these individuals have a vital input to contribute to the teacher-board negotiations, for the principal is uniquely qualified to anticipate the effect a particular item could be expected to have upon the educational program at the building level. As the individual who will ultimately be responsible for implementing the final agreement, the principal's involvement in the formulation of such agreements is imperative.

Secondly, the principal, as a school employee, must have the opportunity to negotiate or influence the terms of his own employment.

When one looks at alternatives, it quickly becomes apparent that some Ohio districts have been more rapidly and more deeply affected by negotiations than others; thus, there is no single "best" means of meeting the aforementioned needs of all principals.

In districts where negotiations have not been implemented or where they have not reached an adversary, distributive proportion, it is quite probable that the principal may effectively influence teachers through, and be represented by, the local education association.

In districts where the principal has been excluded from, disenfranchised by, or taken leave of the association, he may quite naturally seek to contribute his input to and derive his welfare concerns from the administrative hierarchy of which he is a member.

If a central administration is to serve and be served by the principal in these respects, the organizational format must, of necessity, be revised. In place of the unilateral decisions which were made by the superintendent and passed down through the ranks to the level of final implementation, this new format would require a team approach to decision-making, providing an opportunity for all administrative and supervisory personnel to contribute data to the process,

and to understand and relate to the decisions which are forthcoming.

In return for this participation on the part of his principals, the superintendent must be willing to demonstrate his confidence in group processes; he must involve individuals so that they may feel a part of the decisions which are made; and he must show evidence of respect for their abilities, as well as a concern for the morale of his middle administrators. In addition, he must understand that this type of involvement is imperative if the principal is to be expected to consider himself a member of an administrative team.

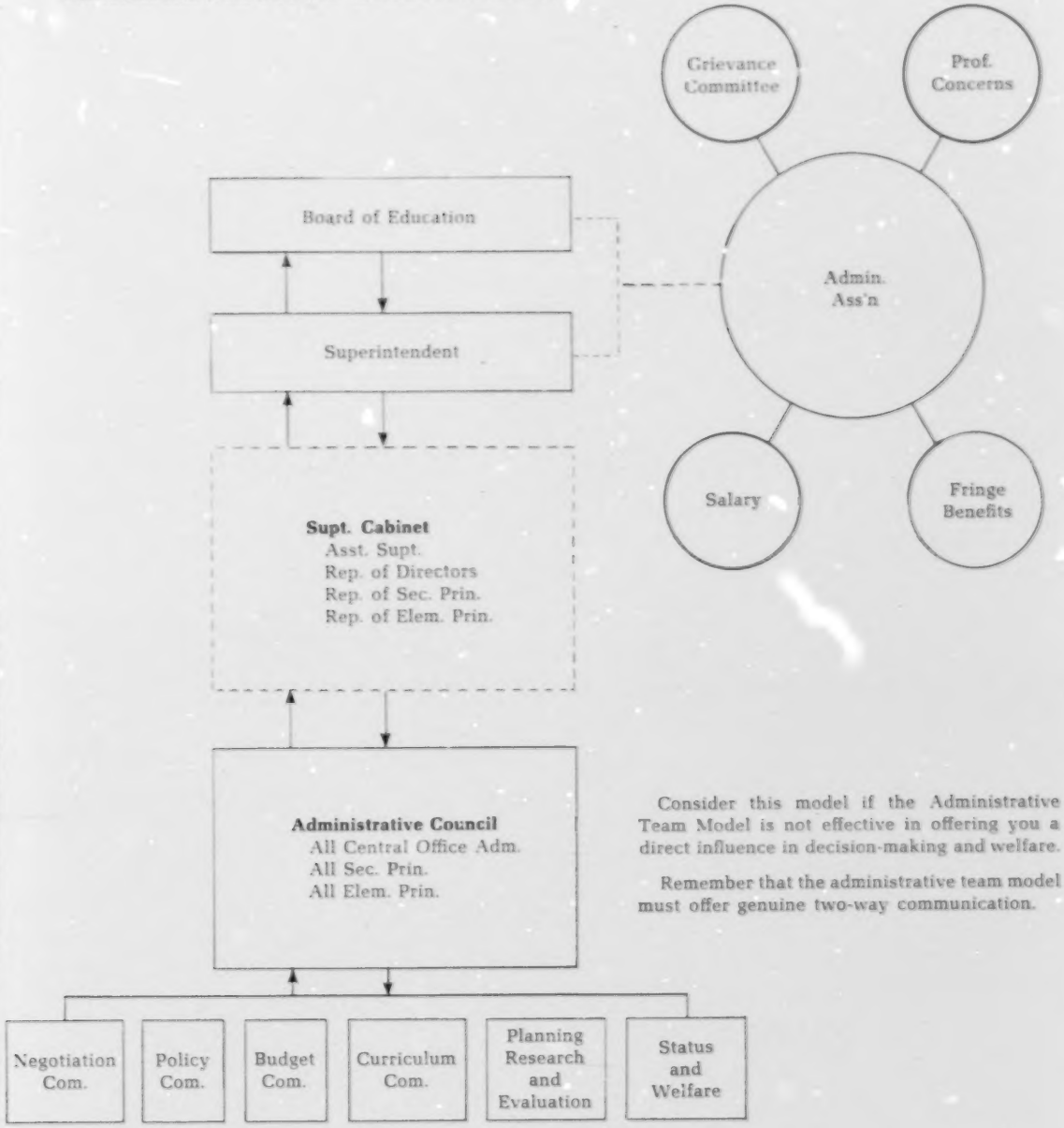
In those districts in which superintendents are unwilling to delegate such authority or are unable to successfully provide for staff involvement, the principals may be expected to resort to any existing power base (union or association), or to create a power base of some type.

Those principals who are unable to protect the quality of their educational program by contributing through the board team, and/or those whose personal and professional needs are not met through such participation, may be expected to seek collective strength to bring such influence to bear upon the board and the superintendent. In this event, principals may establish communications with secondary principals and perhaps other individuals and groups which share their concerns and interests. If they do indeed share common objectives which could best be served through collective efforts, a formal organization may then be formed, complete with a constitution and by-laws. Next, this organization may obtain recognition from the local board of education as official spokesman for these individuals who comprise the membership. A procedural agreement may then be negotiated, under which the board or its representatives agree to meet regularly with the representatives of the organization for the purpose of negotiating those items held negotiable.

The obvious advantage of maintaining a cooperative rapport between all administrators should serve to provide an incentive for the board to negotiate in good faith. Impasse procedures should be provided in the agreement. In

the absence of such procedures, district, state or national organizations may be used to investigate inequitable treatment of administrators or administrator groups. In extreme cases, litigation may be warranted. It should be noted that the degree to which bargaining may be required is conversely related to the effectiveness with which the administrative team concept functions. Normally, if practiced in good faith, the shared administrative team concept not only provides for the needs of principals, but also renders very valuable assistance to the superintendents and boards which see fit to use it.

# ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM MODEL




Consider this model if the Administrative Team Model is not effective in offering you a direct influence in decision-making and welfare.

Remember that the administrative team model must offer genuine two-way communication.

See Alternatives for details on this model!

## INTERRELATEDNESS

Administrative staff has often been provided in inadequate numbers. Industry had found some time ago that it is a false economy to provide expensive physical facilities, production materials, and equipment without a corresponding investment in managerial talent necessary to utilize them most effectively.

Administrators' roles and job descriptions should be relieved of routine detail, clerical tasks, and other logistic functions; thus, freeing him to participate more effectively with the administrative team. This approach will permit team members the time to engage in long range planning that is so necessary for an on-going educational program.

Roles for the administrative team members must be carefully and jointly defined. Such teams must be representative in order to maintain the feeling of team membership. It is quite obvious that leadership will vary, depending upon the objectives which the group is seeking at any given time.

Each administrator involved in the administrative team has a sphere of influence and varied associates, enabling him to bring to the team the views of professional staff members, classified staff, students and lay people. When administrative teams produce general guidelines and policies which permit local adaptations, building staffs have the option of personalizing programs to meet the individual community needs. Principals involved in the administrative team will find this same concept quite applicable and advantageous for teams **within** their buildings.

The board must provide regular opportunities to cooperatively develop administrative personnel policies that are acceptable to all. Such policies should cover extended contracts, transfer policy, leave provisions, and other provisions which assure these people the same or comparable benefits as those received by teachers.

Status and Welfare

One factor, not discussed extensively in the administrative team model, is the various ways teachers are now influ-

encing decision and policy making. Teacher input is occurring through their working on both local and system-wide committees, advisory councils at the central administration level, as well as through professional negotiations. The need for and the impact of their input will vary with the degree to which this administrative team model functions in each school system. The most advantageous means of involving teacher input must ultimately be determined locally.

# SUMMARY

It is quite obvious that the needs of school districts will vary, depending on the size of districts, the degree of negotiation procedures enjoyed by teacher groups and the type of community involved.

Whatever structure is finally selected for a particular school, the following factors should be considered:

1. Involving individuals and groups in decision-making leads them to identify with the objectives and share a responsibility for success.

2. Making decisions as close as possible to the point of implementation produces better decisions and policies.

3. Acting with the counsel of the administrative team, boards of education can best make broad district policy.

4. Acting with the counsel of building staff, the principal can interpret broad based policies to most effectively meet the needs of a particular school.

The administrative team model as presented may be used in various degrees of completeness. The O.D.E.S.P. believes that this approach to decision making and policy formation can be of great benefit to superintendent, principals, central administrators, teachers, students and the community if used properly.